I DID IT TO SAVE MY LIFE LOVE AND SURVIVAL IN SIERRA LEONE 1ST EDITION Pdf Free

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Stevens solicited residents to beg his forgiveness. In spite of both Stevens and his successor Joseph Momoh neglecting the town, residents steadfastly support the party not because of its policies-Sierra Leone's political history is one of "hometown" politics of in-group development-but simply out of fear that their fate would be infinitely worse under an SLPP government. This is the essence of negative love, of clinging to the least of all possible evils. I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork between May and August The town was replete with foreigners, as the aid boom was in full swing. Many people mistook me for NGO staff until they noticed that I did not have a vehicle. They then assumed joyfully that the Peace Corps

was returning, and I was the sign of more volunteers to come.

There ensued several months of patient explanation that I was a student rather than an aid worker, and that my purpose was to research the history of the town and its people, especially with respect to Makeni's awkward postwar position. Knowing my occupation and interests was not enough for residents to understand why I was living in Makeni. They had to make sense of why I would choose, of all places in Sierra Leone, one of the poorest in which to live and work.

I was therefore their own anthropologist and historian, living in Makeni in order to write the truth of their story for the world. People spoke of me as their defender; I was even introduced to their member of parliament as "our anthropologist. The implications of this for my work were profound. Rather than struggling to find interlocutors, I was a magnet for individuals eager to tell their stories. I spent most days walking around town to attend events or hang out with acquaintances, and I was often greeted by a new person who was curious about my work and wanted to offer his or her own story. I spoke to many of these people, but was unable to sit down with all of them. I spent time observing classes in the schools, meetings at the town council, religious events, graduations and ceremonies, and political rallies-and just hanging out with people. My concerns about the social stigma that might result from my speaking to former rebels, soldiers, and other combatants were unfounded, as these people were viewed as part of the fabric of the town, judged as individuals just like everyone else.

The ease with which I recorded life histories, especially with respect to war experiences, implies that residents of the town were acutely aware of the stigma they faced in the country. They wanted to be heard and validated-a story is not real until it has an audience-but they also wanted to defend themselves against accusations of collaboration with the rebels and the accompanying stigma of being traitors to the nation. They viewed me as their mouthpiece. I did my utmost to do justice to them and to the project of understanding love as a social framework by telling their stories, all the while being aware of the fact that narrative is a political tool by which people justify their actions. If Makeni was "backward" and unloved, residents were happy to explain that the government was at fault. After all, they were not in a position to provide electricity, running water, paved roads, and public buildings on their own.

A government that shirks its responsibilities towards its citizens must be publicly proclaimed wicked if it is to see the error of its ways and return to practicing love. It was clear that residents were not proud of Makeni. Comments regularly flew about how "backward" Makeni was compared to the other regional capitals of Bo and Kenema, both of which had grid electricity and paved roads. Residents claimed that no government ever loved Makeni as much as it loved the other two towns, feeding Makeni only the last and least scraps of development. Extensive archival work revealed that from the beginning of the colonial administration of the protectorate in to independence in , the town was never as nurtured-with resources and investment, or with development and infrastructure-as the other two towns to which it was frequently compared.

Makeni is slightly north of the geographical center of Sierra Leone. It is not in the belt of rainforest that dominates the southern and eastern parts of the country, nor is it technically in the arid, cooler north, where lower densities of mosquitoes and tse-tse flies make raising cattle possible. It is in an open wooded savannah, where for most people, mixed crops of vegetables and tubers are the most reliable food source. The area is covered with the seasonally flooded swamps known as boliland, in which, with tremendous effort, rice and other floodplain crops can be grown during the annual rains that fall between May and September.

It lacks, however, a feature that was critical to initial administrative decisions about the suitability of the area for agriculture: rivers. The British colonial administrators who arrived at the end of the nineteenth century were keen to use the country's hinterland for crop production and resource extraction. They found the south and east suitable for growing tree crops and harvesting timber.

The rivers that flowed extensively through these areas and the northwest also made them attractive for the introduction of mechanized swamp rice farming. Makeni had neither rainforest nor rivers, so very little agricultural infrastructure was introduced, aside from some abortive attempts to produce cotton. There was, however, a demand from Europe for palm kernel oil, which prompted the administration to build a railroad to transport kernels, stopping at a point equidistant from the largest palm groves. Palm kernels were plentiful in the north, and the place chosen for the termination of the railroad was Makeni. The town grew as traders and transporters flocked to the booming economy. The problem with boomtowns is eventual bust. The railroad was planned in , when the demand for palm kernels in Europe was astronomical.

By the time the rail line was complete in , demand had subsided, and palm kernels could be extracted at considerably cheaper cost in Southeast Asia. The trade in Makeni senesced, and so did administrative interest. As the area was not contributing anything to the colony's exports, there was no need to invest in physical or human infrastructure, no matter the size of the population. Development such as roads, schools, and hospitals were largely absent for the next thirty years. Makeni was treated as an accidental town, an area of no strategic importance because it contributed nothing to the productivity of the protectorate.

Only the fact that its population continued to swell forced the administration to take notice. It was given the status of northern regional capital in , when it was the second-largest urban center outside of Freetown. Hospitals and administrative structures were built slowly, and always after similar structures were well in place in Bo and Kenema. The latter towns were booming centers of large-scale production and trade of rice, timber, and diamonds. Makeni, by contrast, produced nothing. In an edict from London essentially forced the administration to deliver the same legal structures to Makeni as were already in place in Bo and Kenema.

Even though Makeni had been granted regional capital status because of its population, the administration in Freetown overlooked it as site for a policing system, and instead installed one in a secondary town closer to the diamond region. This is only one of many examples of Makeni not being loved by the administration because it was not contributing, a dynamic which resonated with the system of loyalty politics of nurturing and withdrawal practiced by Sierra Leone's governments since independence. The administration on its own could not fully colonize Sierra Leone. Britain relied heavily on missionaries to establish schools, promote religious conversion, and pave the way for administration, extraction, and development in the hinterlands.

Makeni was again disadvantaged by its physical location: relatively close to the Guinea border and within the traveling realm of the seminomadic Muslim Fula traders. Much of the Temne population was Muslim by the time of administrative incorporation into the protectorate. Feeling that conversion was more likely among the "animist" populations than among those already converted to a monotheistic religion, Christian missionaries congregated in the Mende south. Missionaries built critical infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, and the presence of expatriates in the south and east encouraged the government to supply the areas with roads. Makeni did not receive its first permanent missionary presence until , when a group of Xavierian priests led by Father Augustus Azzolini arrived.

His order built St. Francis School in , added a junior secondary school in , and a senior secondary school in At the time St. Francis opened, only two hundred children in the region attended school, most of them at the iron ore mine complex in Lunsar. By this time, the Bo School for Boys had been training the sons of the southern elite for almost fifty years. Though initially responsible for Makeni's population explosion, the railroad became more of a hindrance to development than a boon.

By the time it reached Makeni in , palm oil prices had dropped to the point where the railroad struggled to break even. The administration hoped to make money by converting the trains to carry passengers. As a last-ditch attempt to make a failing transport industry profitable, the administration refused to connect Makeni to the protectorate's ever-growing road system, hoping this would force people and freight onto the train. Minutes from meetings of the roads boards from the s show that the suggestion to link Makeni up to nearby protectorate roads was consistently tabled, as such a road would absorb traffic that would otherwise use the railroad. The suggestion to attach Makeni to the rest of the road system by toll road was bandied about for several years. Not until the early s, when a plan to dismantle the railroad was already in the works, was Makeni linked up by road directly to Lunsar, a mining town less than seventy miles away.

Makeni residents found themselves politically disadvantaged at independence in , when Sir Milton Margai, a Mende doctor, became the first Prime Minister under the banner of the SLPP. Margai wanted a unified nation, but his untimely death meant his brother Albert-known to be more "tribal"-assumed office. Unlike Milton, Albert restricted his cabinet to trusted Mende advisors. Stevens obscured his own ethnic heritage, which allowed him to court the loyalty of multiple tribes.

He curried favor in areas of the country where his popularity was not assured by his Temne-Limba leanings, and so, paradoxically, under his rule Makeni also received the last and least bits of development. Stevens punished the town after the political defection of his ministers in the UDP was demolished by Stevens's thugs and its leaders imprisoned and eventually executed. Stevens required a public apology from residents before admonishing them that the development of the town relied on their "self-help" measures, which the government would consider supplementing.

In essence, he abused practices of love to chastise and shame the town. Residents were elated when Stevens retired in and named Joseph Momoh, a Limba from the nearby village of Binkolo, as his successor. They assumed that, as he maintained family ties in Binkolo, Momoh would participate in political favoritism-hometown politics-from which Makeni might benefit. Momoh appointed several Makeni natives to key positions in his ministries, however it was soon clear that these appointments were rewards for Momoh's inner circle, rather than acts of love for the town.

On his first visit, the new minister of state presidential affairs reiterated that he was not a servant of Makeni, but of the nation, as was the president himself. Residents must stand behind their president, but they could not expect the town to benefit. According to one resident who served on the town council, this was a veiled warning that Makeni needed to prove its love first before it would receive development. Indeed, Momoh did not grant the town any infrastructure projects in his five-year tenure as president. My interlocutors who remember his presidency took this extremely hard, as, according to one, "We did not know why our own son would not help us. We always stood behind him. In this all-too-brief history of Makeni between and , there is a pattern of consistent, deliberate neglect because of vagaries of history and geography: riverless, Islamic, resource-poor Makeni held no attractions that would make investment, and thus building bonds of love, worthwhile for any administration.

The town was never nurtured partially because residents scrambled to support themselves, produced little, and through forces of circumstance, contributed very little to the colony, and later to the nation. Nurturing is a two-way street, and administrators and politicians expected residents to contribute first. Inhabitants yearned to belong to the nation, but they were weary of apologizing for prioritizing their families and of begging for investment. The only relationship they inspired was the negative kind: punishment for falling out of line. Education was an uncomfortable fit for Makeni residents because it requires long-term sacrifices of both money and manpower that could otherwise be used in business to support families. Successive governments pushed education with a diffuse notion of training leaders for the nation, with rewards delayed until students secured precious jobs, from which money and security would eventually return to the family.

However, jobs were scarce and few families could invest in schooling a child. Education made little sense in the resource-restricted space of interpersonal care defined by poverty; by sending a single child to school a mother hampered her ability to nurture the rest. As a trader who trained her daughters in the market stated, "If I teach my daughters business we will earn money together for our family until they get married. If I put them in school, they will cost us money from now until they get jobs, and we will eat little. And there are no jobs. Makeni residents had little to give each other and less to give the nation in the wake of the war. This did not make them bad people, or "backward. Those sacrifices were made on behalf of one's naked loyalties, and not the state of Sierra Leone. Residents believe that, in contrast to their own lack of resources, Sierra Leone had much to give them-as evidenced by the fact that Bo and Kenema had all their schools rebuilt by the end of What they could not understand was why the government did not invest in the town; hence the feeling that they were being forced to be loyal out of fear that their small concessions would be lost, because they had nothing to offer that would inspire love.

They were adamant that the catch could only be solved by the government making the same sacrifice the trader could not justify for her child: invest first, and give slightly less to other regions. Whatever that investment, Makeni would never have as much to return to the nation. Hence, there was little logical reason for the government to give, and it was right that Makeni should be behind. This paradox is one of the primary frailties of love , and it creates feelings of bitterness, whether in war or in ordinary times. Though rebel forces did not occupy Makeni until , residents felt the effects of war years earlier. The coup, run by young officers with an agenda of political reform, was initially popular. Unlike most previous governments, the NPRC officers lacked clear regional or tribal leanings.

The coup assigned officers to administer each region, and, aside from some arguing over the fact that Makeni was not allowed its own civil militia, the town was fairly calm throughout the initial years of the regime. The refortified army dedicated itself to fighting the RUF, and for the first years of the junta, tribal and regional differences were cast aside as the nation pulled together to fight the rebels. Kabbah opened his presidency with a national tour, during which he addressed the emotional issue of the war. For most towns his words were encouraging. For the people of Makeni, however, he saved vitriol. Citing the fact that Foday Sankoh and one of his commanders were from the north, Kabbah told the assembled crowd that the people of the north-and therefore Makeni, as the capital of the region-were responsible for the war and owed the rest of the nation an apology.

Intellectuals from Makeni reacted violently to what they referred to as "the Hail Theory of War," citing multitudinous facts, from the physical origin of the war in the south to the largely APC sympathies of the north as counterarguments, but the protests fell on deaf ears. Writers from around the nation cheered Kabbah's willingness to galvanize the country's sympathies against the RUF. Though the south and east may have gained new resolve, the consensus in Makeni was that it was being scapegoated. Kabbah's speeches were not enough to keep everyone happy with the government. This coup was a combined effort of the RUF and mutinous members of the Sierra Leone Army, which had fallen out of favor with the government.

Kabbah had encouraged local civil militias to take up the bulk of the fighting on behalf of the government, and followed up this call to arms by slashing army salaries and rice rations. Cast out of government favor, many bitter soldiers were vulnerable to the RUF call to take matters into their own hands, and they succeeded in chasing Kabbah from Freetown in Once he returned from exile, Kabbah concentrated his military efforts on fortifying Freetown and protecting the towns of Bo and Kenema, leaving only a skeleton crew of Nigerian troops in Makeni. The RUF attacked Makeni on December 23, , and after a skirmish in the barracks, the remaining Nigerian troops fled. With no other force to protect the town, it was taken easily by the rebels.

The occupation of Makeni lasted three years. In and , residents cowered in terror as various groups of rebels vied for control of the town. Some groups were comprised of mutinous soldiers led by opportunistic RUF commanders. Others were groups of "real rebels" taking orders from Foday Sankoh himself. Nowhere in this time did Kabbah order an invasion to liberate the town, even as one of his ministers assured residents of Makeni just four months into the occupation that the town would soon be rescued.

Those promises came to nothing. Seven chapters contain extended conversations with seven people as they look back at their experience of living through the violence soldier, rebel, student, trader, evangelist, father, politician in the notorious town of Makeni. Occupied for three years by rebels supported by locals, even Sierra Leoneans considered it backward and morally lost. Violence and suffering are interspersed with the memory of the ordinary and everyday.

Rugiatu was with her pregnant best friend, working in the market, when government helicopters attacked civilians. And there is in this world a thin line, not so much between love and hate, but between love and - well - eating. Thus the elite were despised for not loving their people; the Revolutionary United Front won support for not being greedy eaters. It also invites questions about the changing culture of love, greed and social relationships in our own age of austerity. Does our lexicon of love measure up still? If Bolten examined us, would she find signs of refuge in old patterns of love - or just a new instrumentalism, a more materialistic exchange rate, and general superficiality? Surely not. Love you. By Catherine E. Get a month's unlimited access to THE content online. Just register and complete your career summary. Registration is free and only takes a moment. Once registered you can read a total of 3 articles each month, plus:. Skip to main content. Log In Sign Up.

Download Free PDF. Cakir Kilincoglu. By Catherine E. Berkeley: University of California Press, It is the ethnography of Catherine E. It consists of eight chapters and the bulk of the book—seven of the chapters—is based on the narratives of seven people involved in the war in one way or another. Obviously, what Bolten sets out to do is an unusual undertaking: analyzing the Sierra Leone civil war, which is notorious for rapes, amputations, and kidnappings, through emo- tions.

She carries it out very successfully. Bolten starts with a concise summary of the colonial and postcolonial his- torical background of Sierra Leone and proceeds with the contextualization of Makeni in the political and economic landscape of the country.